

- If embalming remains, perform final rinse after embalming procedures.

## 5. Final Disposition.

- Determine location for storage until final disposition.
- Determine if a public health hazard exists.
- Return of remains to family:
  - Traditional burial.
  - Sealed casket burial.
  - Voluntary cremation.
- Government sponsored disposition.
  - Government burial.
  - Cremation.

## Additional Coordination

### 1. Participate in establishing the Family Assistance Center (FAC).

- Convey FAC requirements to the Emergency Manager:
  - Determine specific role of the ME/C at the FAC.
  - Determine who will oversee FAC (e.g., Public Health, American Red Cross).
  - Hotline/help-line for notification and identification process.
  - Location should be in reasonable proximity to Temporary Morgue.
  - Coordinate information dissemination to family and Public Information Officer (PIO).
  - Need for multiple religious leader support.
  - Address if and when personal effects may be released.

### 2. Maintain managing the daily caseload.

- Add additional shifts to handle incident remains so that original staff can focus on daily caseload.
- Keep incident and daily caseloads separate.

### 3. Establish security for all aspects of the Mass Fatality Incident.

- To include all aspects of the incident operation, the daily caseload and the FAC.

### 4. Determine financial issues.

- Determine if incident is considered a presidential declared disaster.
- Track all activities and expenses.

#### Websites:

SBCCOM - [www2.sbccom.army.mil/hld](http://www2.sbccom.army.mil/hld)

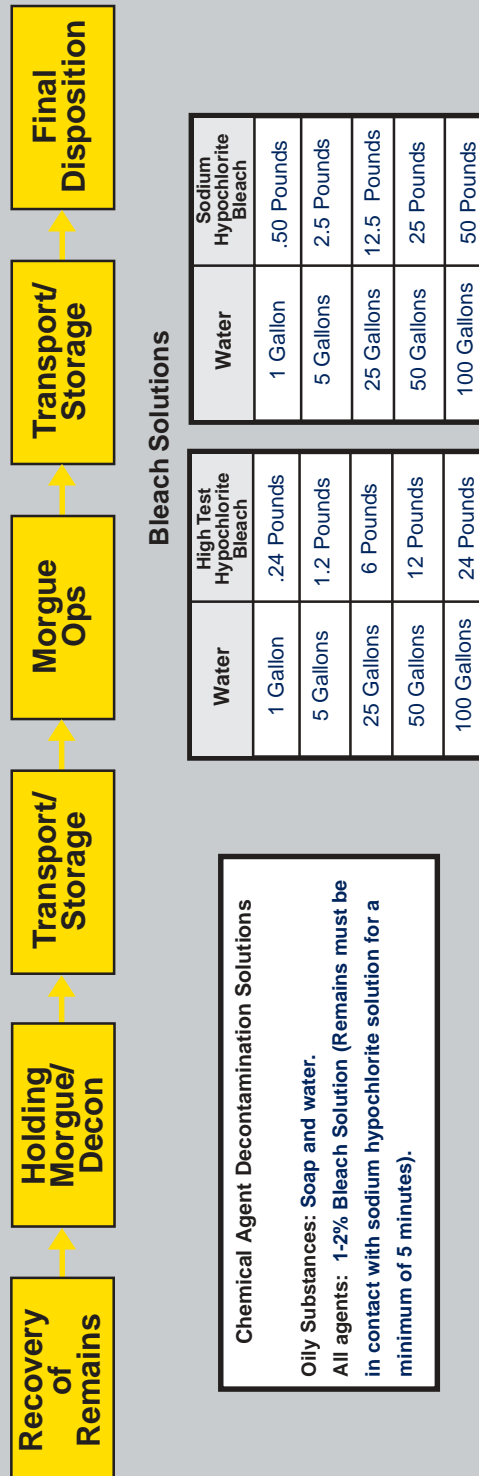
DOJ - [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/osldps](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/osldps)

Office of Victims of Crime - [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc)

DMORT - [www.dmort.org](http://www.dmort.org)

National Transportation and Safety Board - [www.nts.gov](http://www.nts.gov)

### Processing Flow of Contaminated Remains



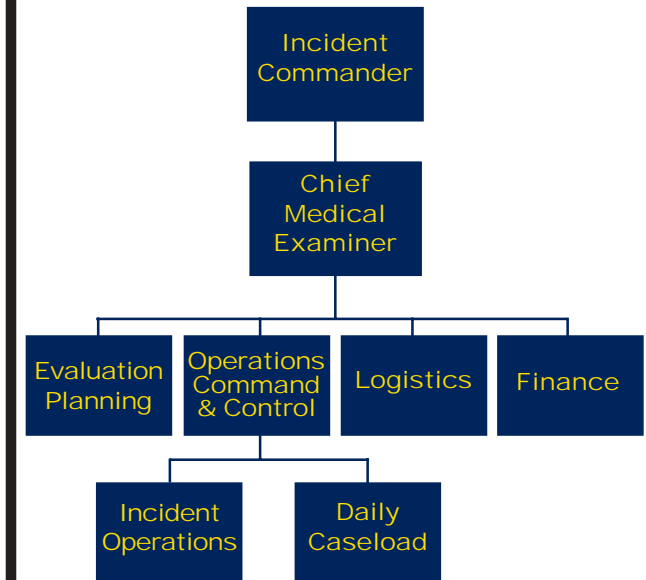
# MEDICAL EXAMINER/CORONER GUIDE FOR MASS FATALITY MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALLY CONTAMINATED REMAINS

#### Prepared by

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### Notional Mass Fatality Incident Command



**Chief Medical Examiner/Coroner (CME) Role** is to create an infrastructure that can process a large number of contaminated remains, as well as accommodate integrating supporting assets into the response effort.

**Emergency Manager (EM) Role** is to provide coordination between the Medical Examiner/Coroner (ME/C) and county, state, and federal assets to support the ME/C in processing remains in a Mass Fatality Incident (MFI).

# Managing The Incident Site

## 1. Obtain information from Incident Commander (IC).

- Type of incident and possible hazards.
- Type of chemical agent.
- Estimated number of remains.
- Location of scene and accessibility to remains.
- Location of incident command post.

## 2. Form a team to evaluate the specific incident.

- Form an evaluation team with Medical Examiner (ME/C), Hazmat technicians, Law Enforcement and other relevant agencies and prepare to enter the scene.
- Check required level of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). ME/C should have two 2-person groups (primary/backup) that can operate in Level A PPE.
- During evaluation:
  - Determine issues (e.g., fragmentation, difficult excavation).
  - Take initial pictures of site.
  - Determine total number of remains and their location.
  - Determine initial number of cases for autopsy.

## 3. Plan incident specific operations with appropriate agencies (e.g., Law Enforcement, Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT), Emergency Manager, and Department of Public Health).

- Coordinate security requirements for remains processing with Incident Commander.
- Determine morgue requirements and location: Holding Morgue and Temporary Morgue.
  - Try to co-locate Mass Fatality Management functions in close proximity to one another.
- Determine decontamination solvents and safe handling procedures based on the specific agent.
- Establish criteria for autopsy based on ME/C capability and Law Enforcement evidence requirements.
- Determine chemical monitoring method and procedures, monitoring location and who will perform the monitoring.
  - To obtain accurate chemical vapor concentration reading, monitor bodies at the same temperature that they will be processed.
- Create infrastructure to process remains (see processing flow of contaminated remains diagram on the back of this guide).
  - Establish who, what, when, where, and how for each function of Remains Processing.
  - Personnel must continue to wear PPE until remains are verified clean by chemical agent monitoring.
- Evaluate requirements for embalming based on incident circumstances.
- Establish effective communications between Holding Morgue, Temporary Morgue, Family Assistance Center (FAC), and the ME/C Headquarters.
- Avoid 24-hour operations when possible.

## 4. Assemble necessary resources.

- See Resource Management.

# Resource Management

### 1. Personnel.

- Determine and assemble personnel who can operate in PPE and assist in the response effort.
- Determine and assign responsible jurisdiction's ME/C personnel to supervisory positions.
- Form teams with local ME/C and law enforcement for each function.
- Determine if additional non-ME/C personnel are needed and assign task to each.
- Establish shifts/breaks with PPE limitations in mind.
- Coordinate water/hydration stations.
- Establish support for ME/C staff (e.g., Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)).

### 2. Assemble other agencies according to established plan.

- Local agencies: HazMat teams, funeral home directors, surrounding ME/Cs, local forensic labs, public health department, etc.
- State agencies: Dept of Environment, National Guard, public health department.
- Federal agencies: Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- Military agencies: Joint Task Force–Civil Support.
- Volunteer agencies: American Red Cross (ARC).

### 3. Assemble equipment according to established plan:

- Appropriate level of PPE for personnel.
- Waterproof durable tracking tool.
- Decontamination line/equipment for Holding and Temporary Morgues.
- Refrigerated trucks for temporary storage/transportation.
- Ventilation fans.
- Storage containers for personal effects.
- Tents/structure to keep remains from public view.
- Embalming station to include final rinse station (based on incident specific decision).
- Additional remains pouches and duct tape.
- Additional evidence collection containers (e.g., new paint cans).

# Remains Processing

### 1. Recovery.

- Determine who will perform the recovery of remains.
- Determine and assign team leaders and members as per plan.
  - Assign tasks to each agency assisting in the recovery.

- Determine what order personnel will enter scene to perform tasks, between the ME/C and Law Enforcement.
- Use waterproof durable tracking/triage tag for remains and personal effects.
- Triage remains – autopsy or external examination.
- Take photographs of remains (i.e., where they were found) to facilitate identification and evidence collection.
- Consider establishing temporary cold storage if the holding morgue is not able to process remains quickly.

### 2. Holding Morgue.

- Establish private area at the incident site to perform:
  - Evidence collection.
  - Initial external evaluation.
  - Initial ID check.
  - Removal and tagging of personal effects - separate into durable and non-durable items.
- Determine:
  - If law enforcement is needed to help identify evidence.
  - If ME/C needs to perform additional procedures as part of the external evaluation (e.g., chemical agent body swab, clothing samples).
- Obtain:
  - Refrigeration storage units/vehicles based on situation.
  - Bulk storage for personal effects (e.g., 55-gallon drums).
  - New/unused paint cans to store evidence.
- Establish area to perform decontamination.
  - Water and bleach/detergents for decon.
  - Can incorporate detailed decon and monitoring remains to verify clean.
  - Mitigate contaminated water run-off.
  - Use double remains pouches - first sealed with duct tape.

### 3. Transportation and Storage.

- Obtain refrigerated vehicles (e.g., trucks or railroad cars).
  - Do not stack remains (use shelving units).
  - Do not place remains higher than waist level of handlers.
- Use of available storage facility in accordance with established plan.

### 4. Morgue Operations.

- Determine if all morgue operations can be centralized in one location or if it must be decentralized into several smaller locations.
- Establish morgue flow.
  - Perform detailed decontamination and monitoring if remains are not previously verified clean.
  - Perform autopsy on designated remains.
  - Perform external examination on all remains.
  - Perform identification procedures.